



Environmental Health News for 5-Star Childcare Facilities

October is

Children's Health Month

Discover The Rewards

In this Issue...

- Energy Efficiency
- Secondhand Smoke
- Fire Safety
- Water Quality Day

This newsletter is provided by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management for child care facilities participating in the 5-Star Environmental Recognition Program. This newsletter provides updates on environmental issues affecting children. Please feel free to use these articles in your own newsletters. We encourage you to post this in areas where parents will have access to it.

If you have any questions or comments about the information included here, please contact Karen Teliha at 800-988-7901.

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Several government agencies have teamed up on health issues affecting children to create "Children's Health Month". Health concerns from school safety, asthma, sun burns, immunizations, bike safety, cleanliness, pesticides, mercury, carbon monoxide, poison prevention, lead, radon, sleep disorders, sudden infant death syndrome, fire safety, and emergency planning are all included in the October celebration. Many of health issues are environmental health threats. The Environmental Protection Agency has chosen the following topics for October.

October 1 - 5	Secondhand Smoke and Children's Health Action Week
October 6 - 12	Children and Asthma Action Week
October 13 - 19	Combustion Gases Awareness Week
October 20 - 26	Radon Action Week
October 27 - 31	Lead and Children's Action Week



So, look inside for ways you can education children and parents on these and other environmental threats and send home the enclosed calendar for parents to learn a new daily tip to protect their children.

Change a Light to Make a Difference

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is challenging Americans to change a light in their homes to illustrate the impact of a consumer's energy choice and the benefits of using energy-efficient light bulbs and fixtures.

Choosing a more energy-efficient lamp can save money and help the environment. If everyone across the country changed just one room in their home to ENERGY STAR lighting, we could keep one trillion pounds of greenhouse gases out of the air.

From October to December, **ENERGY STAR** will team with more than 140 manufacturer, retailer, utility, and state government partners across the country in a national campaign to educate consumers about the environmental and cost benefits of energy-efficient light bulbs, fixtures and ceiling fans with lighting.



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Do the Right Thing! Go Outside for Your Children....



Secondhand Smoke and Children's Health Action Week October 1 - 5

Protecting Children from Secondhand Smoke

As a child care provider, you play an important role in protecting children from secondhand smoke. You can ensure a smoke-free environment while the children are in your care and can inform parents about the health risks from secondhand smoke in the home.

Whether you are providing child care in a center or at home, there are several things you can do to help reduce children's exposure to secondhand smoke. Some ideas for creating a smoke-free environment, for educating parents and for educating children are outlined below.

Establish your child care center as smoke-free. Set a smoke-free policy (see example in "The ABCs of Secondhand Smoke"). This policy requires staff and volunteers to serve as role models by not smoking in the presence of children and parents.

Let parents know about the smoke-free policy and ask them to abide by the same rules when at your facility. Smoke-free signs and messages can be hung around the facility to help remind staff and parents of your policies.

Make sure all staff and volunteers receive training that includes the health risks of secondhand smoke. Share materials in "The ABCs of Secondhand Smoke" module and review them together. After a complete review of all of the materials in the module, use the Discussion Questions to prepare staff on how to handle different situations that they might face in talking to parents about smoking in the home.

Even though we may have missed the opportunity to educate parents about secondhand smoke during October 1-5, remember the Great American Smokeout is on November 21st. Take that opportunity to encourage parents to quit smoking or at least "TAKE IT OUTSIDE!".

Free Curriculum!

The National Safety Council has a free training module for childcare providers called "The ABCs of Secondhand Smoke". A portion of this manual was mailed to you last year, but you can receive the entire module by checking the web at: www.nsc.org/ehc/indoor/abc.htm or by calling the National Safety Council at (202) 293-2270.

The module includes:

- tips on how to talk to parents about secondhand smoke and the effect it has on their child,
- a fill in the blank Smoke-Free Policy for childcare facilities to post,
- several activities for children.



Free Brochures and Posters!

For additional brochures, posters, videos, and more on how to quit smoking, call the Center for Disease Control at 1-800-CDC-1311 or download materials from their website at: www.cdc.gov/tobacco/.

The American Cancer Society also has brochures and magazines available for people who would like to quit. They can be contacted at 800-ACS-2345.

Team Up for Fire Safety™

Fire Prevention Week October 6 - 12, 2002



Every fire safety team starts with firefighters - but they can't do it alone. Effective fire safety depends on teamwork. That's why the theme for this year's Fire Prevention Week (FPW) is "Team Up for Fire Safety™." It's a simple idea: team up with the people with whom you live, work, play, and worship so that all of you will be better prepared to prevent and survive a home fire.

This year's Fire Prevention Week campaign touches on three simple but essential safety lessons that everyone can learn: installing and testing smoke alarms, practicing home escape plans, and hunting for home hazards.

SMOKE ALARMS

Besides installing new batteries in all smoke alarms at least once a year, smoke alarms in your home or childcare that are more than 10 years old, should be replaced.



Because smoke rises, alarms should be mounted high on walls or ceilings. Wall-mounted alarms should be positioned 4-12 inches from the ceiling; ceiling-mounted alarms should be positioned 4 inches away from the nearest wall. On vaulted ceilings, be sure to mount the alarm at the highest point of the ceiling. Smoke alarms should not be installed near a window, door or forced-air register where drafts could interfere with their operation.

FIRE ESCAPE PLANS



Developing and practicing a home fire escape plan that everyone understands can mean the difference between life and death. Fire can grow and spread through your home or childcare very quickly. It's important that you, your staff, and the children be prepared to react as soon as the smoke alarm sounds.

CHILDCARE HAZARDS

Often receptionists who sit by the front door will have a space heater to stay warm in the winter. These are illegal in most licensed facilities. Make sure they are not being

used at your facility. Check for frayed wires and replace them. Make sure extension cords are not being used. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for plugging an appliance into a receptacle outlet (most receptacle outlets contain two receptacles). As an added precaution, avoid plugging more than one high-wattage appliance into a single receptacle.

Many home childcare facilities have candles. These should not be burned in the presence of children, both for fire safety and asthma reasons. Candle fires are on the rise in the United States. In recent years, candles have been associated with more than 10,000 home fires, more than 150 related deaths, and more than 1,000 related injuries each year.

How can you celebrate Fire Prevention Week?

Ask your local fire department to visit your childcare to teach the children about fire safety. Why not say "thank you" to firefighters in your community with a special Sparky coloring sheet enclosed? While the firefighters are there, ask them to train teachers on how to use fire extinguishers.



USING FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

To operate a fire extinguisher, remember the word PASS:

- Pull the pin. Hold the extinguisher with the nozzle pointing away from you, and release the locking mechanism.
- Aim low. Point the extinguisher at the base of the fire.
- Squeeze the lever slowly and evenly.
- Sweep the nozzle from side-to-side.

If every household in the United States changed the lighting in one room of their home to **ENERGY STAR**,...

- We would save 857 billion kWh of energy and keep one trillion pounds of greenhouse gases out of the air.
- Our annual energy savings alone would be equivalent to the annual output of more than 21 power plants.
- Our annual savings could light more than 34 million US homes for one year.

Check the web at www.energystar.gov/stores/rebatefinder.shtml to find rebates on energy efficient products from light bulbs to dishwashers, to windows.



Be sure to look for the **ENERGY STAR** logo!

Pregnant Woman should Limit Tuna Intake

According to several news reports, the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) is being urged by its advisory panel to place stronger warnings on tuna. In July, the panel recommended that pregnant women and women of childbearing age limit their intake of tuna, at least while the further studies of mercury content are conducted. During the past year, the FDA removed tuna from its list of fish that may pose a risk to pregnant women because they contain levels of mercury that could cause learning disabilities in newborns.



More than 100 million people have been born since the Clean Water Act was passed in 1972. That's not even counting young children in 1972 who could not remember the Cuyahoga River on fire, or the Potomac River too

dirty for swimming, or Lake Erie dying. That is what we faced 30 years ago and why the Clean Water Act launched an all-out assault on water pollution

Many exciting events are being planned to celebrate 2002 as The Year of Clean Water. The 30th anniversary of the passage of the Clean Water Act falls on **October 18, 2002**. On this day, volunteer water monitors, water agency professionals, members of the public, and government leaders will take to our streams, lakes, wetlands, and bays to test for water quality as part of the celebration. EPA encourages your participation as well.

Here's what you can do:

Talk to school kids about water pollution and what they can do to help. Use the activity included here called "In/Out of Stream".

Organize a stream walk to educate children about the life along and in a stream and how pollutants can effect it.

Read a book about life along a stream and have the kids draw pictures.

In/Out of the Stream

Concept: Students will decide what things are “good” to have in a stream as they are given a card with an item and must decide whether to stand “in” or “out” of the stream.

Procedure: Give each student one card with an item on it. Make one half of the room “Ok in the stream” and make the other half “Keep out of the stream.” Have them go to the side of the room where they think their objects belong.

Objects include:

Ok in the stream

fish
algae
plants
sediment (dirt)
bugs
trees
sticks/leaves
rocks/gravel
oxygen

Keep out of the stream

trash
a lot of algae
fertilizer
tons of sediment (dirt)
pesticides
detergents
pathogens (disease-causing bacteria)
oil/gas
sewage
cows

Discussion: After they have finished matching up their objects, begin discussing the objects and why they are ok in the stream or why they should be kept out of the stream. You can also ask them how their particular object can get into the stream (this primarily applies to the “Keep out of the stream” items).

“Ok” in the stream:

- Fish
- Algae: algae is an important food source for bugs and fish living in the stream
- Plants: aquatic plants produce oxygen, and also provide habitat for fish
- Sediment (dirt): sediment is a natural part of streams, but too much sediment isn’t good for the fish and bugs living in the stream
- Bugs: there are lots of bugs (benthic macroinvertebrates) that live in streams! Provide food for fish; can be used as a tool to determine water quality...some bugs can live in polluted water, but some can only live in

clean water.

- Trees: roots help stabilize stream banks, reducing erosion;
- Sticks/leaves: natural part of stream, can provide habitat and food for bugs
- Rocks/gravel: natural part of some streams, provide habitat for algae, bugs
- Oxygen: bugs and fish need it to survive

Keep “out” of stream:

- Trash
- A lot of algae: a lot of algae is a sign that there may be too many nutrients in the stream; too much algae can deplete the oxygen (when the algae die, they decompose and this uses up oxygen)
- Fertilizer: (from runoff...farms, residential, and business) Vegetation needs fertilizer to grow, but too much fertilizer can be a bad thing as it adds nutrients to the water, resulting in excess algae.
- Lots of sediment (dirt): too much sediment (result of runoff & erosion on the land) can clog the gills of fish and bugs, as well as fill in the spaces between rocks that some bugs like to live in.
- Pesticides: (from runoff) can be harmful to humans and aquatic life
- Detergents: can add phosphates to the stream
- Pathogens (disease-causing bacteria): can be harmful to humans and aquatic life
- Oil/gas: (from runoff) can be harmful to humans and all aquatic life
- Sewage: (from faulty septic systems, livestock in stream, CSOs, etc.) adds nutrients and pathogens to the stream
- Cows: can erode the stream banks, adding more sediment to the stream; can also add nutrients and pathogens through manure

TIPS TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS

Help Children Breathe Easier

- Wash children's hands before they eat and wash bottles, pacifiers, and toys often
- Don't smoke or let others smoke in your home or car
- Keep your home as clean as possible. Dust, mold, certain household pests, secondhand smoke, and pet dander can trigger asthma attacks and allergies.
- Limit outdoor activity when air pollution is bad such as on ozone alert days

Protect children from lead poisoning

- Wash children's hands before they eat and wash bottles, pacifiers, and toys often
- Wash floors and window sills to protect kids from dust and peeling paint contaminated with lead - especially in older homes
- Run the cold water for 30 seconds to flush lead from pipes
- Get kids tested for lead - check with your doctor
- Test your home for lead paint hazards if it was built before 1978

Protect children from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning

- Have fuel-burning appliances, furnace flues and chimneys checked once a year
- Never use gas ovens or burners for heat and never use barbeques/grills indoors or in the garage
- Never sleep in rooms with unvented gas or kerosene space heaters
- Don't run cars or lawnmowers in the garage
- Install a UL approved CO detector in sleeping areas

Safeguard them from high levels of radon

- Test your home for radon with a home test kit
- Fix your home if your radon level is 4 pCi/L or higher. If you need help, call 800-644-6999

Protect children from too much sun

- Have them wear hats, sunglasses, and protective clothing
- Use sunscreen on kids over 6 months and keep infants out of the sun
- Keep them out of the mid-day sun - the sun is most intense between 10 and 4

Keep pesticides and other toxic chemicals away from children

- Put food and trash away in closed containers to keep pests from coming into your home
- Don't use pesticides if you don't have to - look for alternatives
- Read product labels and follow directions
- Use bait & traps instead of bug sprays when you can and place the bait & traps where kids can't get them
- Store where kids can't reach them and never put in other containers that kids can mistake for food or drink
- Keep children, toys & pets away when using pesticides and don't let them play in fields, orchards and gardens after pesticides have been used
- Wash fruits and vegetables under running water before eating - peel them when possible

Protect children from contaminated fish and polluted water

- Call the local or state health department to learn about any local advisories for limiting the amount of fish to be eaten or beach closings
- Take used motor oil to a recycling center and properly dispose of toxic household chemicals
- Find out what's in your local drinking water - call your local water system for your annual drinking water quality report or, if you have a private home drinking water well, test it every year

CPSC Urges Seasonal Heating Systems Inspections to Prevent CO Deaths

As the weather turns colder throughout much of the country, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) urges consumers to have a professional inspection of all fuel-burning heating systems - including furnaces, boilers, fireplaces, water heaters and space heaters - to detect potentially deadly carbon monoxide (CO) leaks.

Under certain conditions, all appliances that burn fuels can leak deadly CO. These fuels include kerosene; oil; coal; both natural and liquefied petroleum gas; and wood.

"Having a professional inspection of your fuel-burning heating appliances is the first line of defense against the silent killer, carbon monoxide poisoning," said CPSC Chairman Hal Stratton.

CO is a colorless, odorless gas that can be produced by burning any fuel. The initial symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to flu, and include headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, nausea and dizziness. Exposure to high levels of CO can cause death.

"Each year, CO poisoning from heating systems and water heaters kills about 160 people in the U.S.," said Stratton. "Many of these tragedies could be prevented by having a professional check your heating system and water heater annually for CO leaks."

CPSC recommends that the yearly professional inspection include checking chimneys, flues and vents for leakage and blockage by debris. Birds, other animals and insects sometimes nest in vents and block exhaust gases, causing the gases to enter the home. In addition, all vents to furnaces, water heaters, boilers and other fuel-burning heating appliances should be checked to make sure they are not loose or disconnected.

Also, have your appliances inspected for gas leaks and adequate ventilation. A supply of fresh air is important to help carry pollutants up the chimney, stovepipe or flue, and is necessary for the complete combustion of any fuel. Never block ventilation air openings. Also, make sure the appliance is operating on the fuel that it is designed to use. To convert an appliance to burn propane, it must be modified by a professional.

CPSC recommends that every home have at least one CO alarm.

Cigarette Taxes Used to Provide Free Preschool in Los Angeles County...

According to the August 9, 2002 Associated Press, officials voted to spend \$100 million in tobacco tax money to offer free preschool for every three and four year old in Los Angeles County. According to the article, Proposition 10 was designed to generate an estimated \$700 million per year for social services for families with children under age five, including prenatal care, smoking cessation programs, immunizations and domestic violence prevention. The program was funded through a 50-cent tax per pack on cigarettes.